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FM AMEMBASSY DILI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3157
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0752
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0820
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0722
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0549
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0582
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0660
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0445
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 2495

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DILI 000592

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
PACOM FOR POLAD AND JOC
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [UN](#) [TT](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON POLICING AND SECURITY ISSUES

DILI 00000592 001.2 OF 003

11. (SBU) Summary: UNMIT reports that the situation in and around Dili IDP camps, which previously have been the main flashpoints for violence, largely has returned to "normal," with only sporadic rock fights and disturbances. However, they remain concerned that government plans to utilize PNTL and F-FDTL in IDP relocation operations could provoke new security issues. UNMIT reports that a much-delayed operation to move IDPs from the four most problematic camps should begin in the coming week and the possible onset of heavy rains adds to the urgency. Meanwhile, the past week has seen a significant upswing in violent clashes between martial arts groups in Dili and in some districts. The reactivation of screened PNTL continues to proceed slowly due the high number of those rejected due to allegations of past misconduct. There is evidence of increasing pressure from GOET and unscreened PNTL themselves for police to be reactivated outside the screening mechanism. In this mix, the increasing visibility of armed F-FDTL soldiers in Dili presents a further element of risk. End Summary.

12. (SBU) At recent briefings for local diplomats and international agencies, UNMIT and UNPOL officials reported a major reduction in incidents involving the IDP camps in Dili, and fewer crimes overall in most districts of Dili. UNPOL noted its increased operational presence around the camps and at newly reopened police stations in the Dili suburbs. However, they warned that the IDP situation could become volatile at any time. UNMIT reports that after a number of delays the GOET has agreed to an UNMIT operational plan to begin relocating residents of the four most problematic IDP camps in Dili (i.e., the hospital, port, Obrigado barracks, and airport camps). As of December 7 UNMIT was only awaiting the final GOET list of ten new sites to which IDPs unwilling or unable to move back to their homes will be relocated and UNMIT hopes that the process will begin in the coming week. As an incentive for IDPs to relocate, the UN has announced that blanket food distributions in Dili will cease and henceforth food will only be provided to vulnerable groups. The

GOET has announced that no further assistance will be provided to any IDP camp residents who fail to register for relocation by December 15. Heavy precipitation on December 7 underlined the threat of the coming rainy season, and there are fears that flooding of the camps could result in a humanitarian crisis as well as a security concern if desperate IDPs were to attempt to occupy government facilities or local hotels.

13. (SBU) GOET plans to utilize PNTL and F-FDTL in the relocation operation have raised additional concerns. UNMIT has received assurances that no F-FDTL personnel mentioned in the UN Commission of Inquiry report will be involved but remains seriously concerned that some of the F-FDTL elements will be armed, despite assurances from the Prime Minister to the contrary. F-FDTL standard operating procedures calls for armed escorts for any F-FDTL carrying out such operations. The GOET plan calls for 150 F-FDTL and a like number of PNTL to be involved in these operations, but given the relatively small number of screened PNTL available this does not seem possible.

14. (U) While IDP-centered incidents have abated, Dili has nonetheless seen a number of violent incidents in the past week involving martial arts groups (MAGs) and similar organizations/gangs. A series of clashes between PSHT and 7-7 members have taken place over the last few days in the Taibesse, Kampung Baru and Bebonuk neighborhoods of Dili respectively. These have resulted in two deaths, one stabbing and one gunshot in Taibesse, and one stabbing death in Bebonuk, as well as a handful of gunshot and stabbing wounds. Several house burnings have also occurred. These MAG clashes represent a significant shift in conflict dynamics as the East v. West element that has characterized much of the violence of recent months seems to be entirely absent. Interestingly, organizations working in IDP camps report that their employees are feeling safer to move freely around Dili as they currently do not expect to be singled out for being from one or the other part of the country, and instead assess that only members of the MAG groups and gangs with tell-tale tattoos, scars or markings are now vulnerable to

DILI 00000592 002.2 OF 003

targeting.

15. (U) The current clashes in Dili follow a number of incidents in the districts in the last couple months, usually involving the Colimau 2000 group and PSHT. These clashes likewise have resulted in some deaths and house burnings, including an incident last month in Ermera district in which a PSHT member and several members of his family were killed in a single attack. Colimau 2000, 7-7 and a third group, Korika, reportedly have a loose alliance with a focus against PSHT. However, it is unclear to what extent the recent district incidents are linked to current developments in Dili. Humanitarian aid sources note that the delayed onset of the rainy season, and consequent food shortages in the districts are already an issue and are likely to worsen in the coming months. Food security issues are expected to exacerbate community conflict in the districts.

16. (SBU) Screening and reintegration of PNTL officers is proceeding at a slow pace, despite pressure from GOET leaders who are demanding that PNTL be more quickly put back on the street. The main problem is that the screening process is turning up numerous complaints of misconduct and even criminal behavior among PNTL officers that must be investigated further. There are 600 PNTL previously working in Dili now in some stage of the screening process of over 1,000 registered who have been registered. The files of some 60 per cent of these have been set aside for further investigation. Of a list of 150 PNTL submitted by the GOET for the IDP camp operations, only 36 passed muster.

17. (SBU) It should be noted that only those with absolutely no allegations are currently making it through the screening process. According to members of the Australian UNPOL contingent, it is possible, in fact likely, that a large number who have not passed have allegations that can be quickly cleared up once attention is given to this process. That said, there is

also an expectation that there are plenty of cases where allegations are well founded. So far UNPOL has not begun work on this front. Leaving this more intensive stage of the vetting unaddressed poses some real risks given the number of suspended police officers involved. Combined with the fact that their F-FDTL counterparts are essentially back to business as usual with no restrictions on their movement or activities, resentment at being indefinitely sidelined could fester.

18. (SBU) Acting Police Commissioner Antero Lopes acknowledges that there are ongoing threats by some unscreened PNTL to reoccupy their offices. There is also some agitation among the unscreened personnel of the special units to whom the message has been conveyed that the current priority for PNTL is community policing not rapid reaction forces. Lopes acknowledged that "a majority" of the PNTL who participated in the November 16 "Peace March" with FDTL were unscreened, supposedly non-active personnel. He said a number of unscreened PNTL were going about in their uniforms but mostly in connection with ceremonial occasions. The unscreened "non-active" leadership of PNTL is only supposed to participate in ceremonial events out of uniform, as non-active Commander Paulo Martins did on November 28. The leadership did not appear at the December 1 ceremony to inaugurate the UNPOL-PNTL headquarters and according to Martins, he was neither invited nor informed. In contrast, F-FDTL commander, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak was there in full uniform.

19. (SBU) In this mix of changing and complicated security issues, a PNTL that appears likely to remain in institutional limbo for months to come, and impatience on the part of both police and GOET for national police to be back on the streets, the visible reemergence of the F-FDTL introduces a further element of risk. So far, their appearances at various meetings and ceremonies, including the November 28 independence day and December 7 Invasion day celebrations, have gone off without incident, but the large number of armed F-FDTL involved in these events raised concerns. Armed F-FDTL members present in Dili and

DILI 00000592 003.2 OF 003

in official ceremonies was the pre-crisis norm and there is currently no available evidence indicating clear intent on the part of F-FDTL to intentionally destabilize the current status quo. However, there are worries of potential intent to expand the role of the F-FDTL beyond its pre-crisis norm.

110. (SBU) Comment: As has been repeatedly in evidence in recent months, there is a continual gravitational pull away from legitimate state institutions and processes toward the more informal networks, especially among the security forces. The UN has conveyed a strong message to GOET that any involvement in policing operations by unscreened PNTL is unacceptable and that any F-FDTL members involved in community or IDP outreach or operations should under no circumstances be armed. We should encourage the UN to be firm on these issues and provide diplomatic support vis-à-vis the GOET. Likewise, we should strongly encourage the UN to move ahead with the next stage of PNTL screening to ensure that police with false or insufficient allegations of misconduct can return to duty while those with serious violations are appropriately disciplined. Extended delay of this process will serve no one and presents further risks. End comment.

GRAY